

Message Text

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ACTION EA-09

INFO OCT-01 NEA-10 IO-13 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-04

H-01 INR-07 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01

SP-02 SS-15 USIA-06 TRSE-00 OMB-01 /079 W

-----110958Z 008815 /10

P R 110909Z MAY 77

FM AMEMBASSY KUALA LUMPUR

TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 7188

INFO AMEMBASSY JIDDA

AMEMBASSY JAKARTA

AMEMBASSY MANILA

AMEMBASSY SINGAPORE

AMEMBASSY TRIPOLI

C O N F I D E N T I A L KUALA LUMPUR 2939

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: PFOR, MY

SUBJECT: TUN MUSTAPHA TO ATTEND ISLAMIC FOREIGN MINISTERS CONFERENCE

1. FORMER SABAH CHIEF MINISTER TUN MUSTAPHA BIN DATO HARUN WILL ATTEND

THE TRIPOLI ISLAMIC FOREIGN MINISTERS CONFERENCE LATER THIS MONTH, ACCORDING TO THE MAY 7 EDITION OF THE PRO-MUSTAPHA KINABALU SABAH TIMES (KST). THE NEWSPAPER NOTED THAT MUSTAPHA HAD RECEIVED A "SPECIAL

INVITATION FROM THE LIBYAN GOVERNMENT TO ATTEND THE CONFERENCE AS A DELEGATE" AND THAT HE HAD ACCEPTED THE INVITATION.

2. THE SAME ARTICLE ANNOUNCING MUSTAPHA'S TRIPOLI VISIT ALSO QUOTED THE FORMER CHIEF MINISTER AS SAYING HE WOULD GIVE SERIOUS CONSIDERATION

TO ANY MOVE TO RECALL HIM TO TAKE ACTIVE PART IN POLITICS. ANOTHER ARTICLE ON THE FRONT PAGE OF THE SAME EDITION OF THE KST SAID THAT MUSTAPHA, WHO IS PRESIDENT OF THE UNITED SABAH ISLAMIC ORGANIZATION (USIA), HAD BEEN NOMINATED FOR MEMBERSHIP IN THE MUSLIM WORLD LEAGUE

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"TO REPRESENT THE MUSLIMS OF MALAYSIA." THE ARTICLE NOTED THAT THE NOMINATION HAD COME FROM MECCA.

3. COMMENT. MUSTAPHA APPEARS TO BE MAKING A POLITICAL COMEBACK WITHIN HIS UNITED SABAH NATIONAL ORGANIZATION (USNO). IT IS STILL UNCLEAR TO US AND TO OBSERVERS WE HAVE TALKED WITH RECENTLY IN KOTA KINABALU WHETHER HE IS ALSO SEEKING TO REGAIN FULL POWER IN

SABAH OR JUST WANTS TO HEAD USNO ONCE AGAIN IN ORDER TO REGAIN HIS LOST PRIDE. IF THE LATTER IS TRUE, HE MIGHT SUCCEED BY OFFERING TO EFFECT A RECONCILIATION WITH THE RULING BERJAYA PARTY AFTER WHICH HE COULD RETIRE GRACIOUSLY FROM THE SCENE. IN ANY CASE, MUSTAPHA'S ATTENDANCE AT THE TRIPOLI FOREIGN MINISTERS CONFERENCE AND HIS USIA ACTIVITIES SHOULD HELP TO SHORE UP HIS SUPPORT IN THE HEAVILY MUSLIM USNO.

4. WHEN MUSTAPHA WAS CHIEF MINISTER OF SABAH THE STATE REPORTEDLY WAS A CONDUIT FOR LIBYAN-SUPPLIED ARMS FOR THE MUSLIMS OF THE SOUTHERN PHILIPPINES. MALAYSIAN INVOLVEMENT IN THIS ACTIVITY APPEARED TO END WHEN MUSTAPHA WAS FORCED TO RESIGN IN LATE 1975. PRIME MINISTER HUSSEIN, WHO HAS SOUGHT TO IMPROVE RELATIONS THROUGHOUT ASEAN, IS PROBABLY NOT PARTICULARLY HAPPY WITH MUSTAPHA'S INVITATION TO TRIPOLI.
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